

# WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

S/CSC/4  
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## Committee on Specific Commitments

### REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS TO THE COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN SERVICES

1. The Committee on Specific Commitments has held six formal meetings in 1999. The minutes of these meetings appear in documents S/CSC/M/7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. In its meeting held on 23 March 1999, the Committee re-elected Mr. Juan A. Marchetti of Argentina as its Chairman. The discussions of the Committee focused on four items: the procedures for the implementation of Article XXI of the GATS (modification of schedules), classification issues, the institution of a system of electronically consolidated and updated schedules, and the revision of the scheduling guidelines.

#### I. PROCEDURES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE XXI OF THE GATS

2. Following consultations on the finalization of the procedures for the implementation of GATS Article XXI (modification of schedules) conducted by the Chairman throughout the year, the Committee recommended at its meeting of 19 July, the adoption of these procedures. Subsequently, the procedures were adopted by the Council for Trade in Services at its meeting of 20 July. The text of the procedures and a declaration of the Chairman referring to its adoption appear respectively in documents S/CSC/W/21 and S/CSC/W/23. The Committee has also held consultations on the text of a draft decision by the Council for Trade in Services on certification of rectification or improvements to schedules of specific commitments.

#### II. CLASSIFICATION

3. As far as classification issues are concerned, the Committee began the examination of the points on classification raised during the Exchange of Information Programme conducted by the Council for Trade in Services, on the basis of a compilation of these points drawn up by the Secretariat and of working documents submitted by delegations. It was agreed that, at each meeting of the Committee dedicated to classification, the Secretariat would produce an informal document listing and updating the suggestions and solutions proposed by Members with regard to the various sectors. The Committee agreed on a Member-driven process based on concrete proposals made by delegations. In this context it undertook a detailed examination of environmental and environmentally related services and began similar work on legal services, energy services, postal services and construction services.

4. Secondly, the Committee began discussions on the question of the definition and treatment of new services. There was broad agreement that this was more a question of classification than of coverage and that a pragmatic approach, based on concrete examples identified during the Exchange of Information Programme of the Council, was needed.

### **III. ESTABLISHMENT OF A NON BINDING ELECTRONIC COMPILATION OF SCHEDULES OF COMMITMENTS**

5. The Committee approved the establishment of a system of electronically consolidated and updated schedules of commitments. It was agreed that these electronic schedules would not have legal status.

The Committee approved the propositions made by the Secretariat with regard to calendar, format, circulation, language, prices and verification procedure for this project. It agreed in particular that the outcome of this work should be published and sold to the general public in a CD-ROM format and that, in view of budgetary constraints, the elaboration of a CD-ROM version was a priority as compared to an online version.

### **IV. REVISION OF THE SCHEDULING GUIDELINES**

6. On scheduling guidelines the Committee requested the Secretariat to produce, as a basis for a future examination of the guidelines, an informal and technical document on scheduling problems emerging from the guidelines themselves and from their implementation (S/CSC/W/19). On this basis, the Committee has been discussing the issues raised by the Secretariat as well as alternatives to address them. Subsequently, the Committee began the examination of a first revised draft of the scheduling guidelines containing the points on which there is an emerging understanding. The Committee also asked the Secretariat to produce a checklist of outstanding problems on scheduling matters and began its examination.

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